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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC No. 04384-85
4 September 1985MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central IntelligenceFROM: George Kolt
National Intelligence Officer for EuropeSUBJECT: Suggested Discussion Item on Berlin Air Corridors
for DCI Meetings with NSC Officials

1. Introduction and Summary. The forthcoming Reagan-Gorbachev Summit and particularly the resumption of talks on direct air links between the US and the USSR provide an opportunity for a diplomatic push to close the long drawn out Berlin air corridor discussions.

2. Current Situation in the Air Corridors

- For reservations up to 3500 feet the Soviets are now routinely granting a 10.5 mile reservation free space outside the Berlin Control Zone (BCZ). The Soviets say this is enough; the Allies want 17 but believe that 15 would be sufficient. The UK will probably soon push the Allies to go to the 15 mile (or even to a 13 mile) fall-back position.
- The Soviets disagree with the Allied contention that for each 1000 feet above 3,500 feet in Soviet air reservations, the Allies need an additional 5 miles of reservation-free space outside the BCZ. (If 17 miles for a 3,500 foot reservations, then 22 miles for a 4500 foot reservation, 27 miles for a 5500 foot reservation, etc.). The Allies would settle for 3 miles for each 1000 feet above 3,500 feet.
- In the BASC discussions the Soviets have alternated between promises of greater flexibility and hardline stances.
- In practice they have shown some flexibility. In June they provided 20 miles outside the BCZ for a 4500 foot reservation. Also in June, the Soviet controller readily

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approved an inadvertent British notification of a flight through the reserved airspace, and later stated that this was an example of Soviet flexibility (for an inadvertent demonstration flight!). In August the Soviets approved an emergency request for a Pan Am aircraft encountering cabin pressurization problems to fly at 3000 feet through a reservation then in effect.

3. What Has Been Accomplished?

- In juridical terms the Soviets, by falling back from their original line that they had the unilateral right to impose rules in the Berlin Air Corridors, have recognized the principle of joint management of the corridors. The obverse of this is that, by accepting compensatory air space above 10,000 feet for Soviet air reservations, the Allies have lent additional credence to the Soviet contention that the air corridors normally extend only up to 10,000 feet--something we have long accepted de facto but still refuse to accept de jure.
- In practical terms, the safety of flights into Berlin has been improved by the 10.5 mile reservation free area outside the BCZ but the situation is still not satisfactory. We need those extra miles mentioned above and should get them as a matter of accepted routine rather than through shows of exceptional and occasional Soviet flexibility.
- There has been enough progress, however, so that the UK (and mostly likely France and the US as well!) will not want to resort to demonstration flights. Under these circumstances the outlook is for continued protracted discussions in the BASC with further progress doubtful.

4. The Summit and the likely reopening of the New York-Moscow air route, however, give us the opportunity to raise the issue in another venue. First, the general Soviet inclination before the Summit is to demonstrate reasonableness on relatively minor issues in the hope of getting US concessions on bigger issues. Second, it would seem strange for us to resume direct flights between our two countries while the Soviets are still imposing rules that endanger Allied (aircraft) in the Berlin air corridors. The major argument against making this link is that we have tried hard over the years not to let the Soviets pressure us in Berlin in order to get concessions somewhere else on the globe. I think this particular linkage is somewhat different. First, the Berlin Air Corridor safety issue deals with air matters and it is generically akin to the safety of Pacific Air routes--an item which, I understand, is part of the package on the New York-Moscow route. Second, we need not

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link Berlin directly to the New York-Moscow air route negotiations. Instead we can make the point that it would be hard for the US to sign a new air agreement while the Soviets were endangering air safety in the Berlin air corridors. We are not asking the Soviets for very much more in the Berlin air corridors. All we want is a few more miles--miles that are very important for safety and probably don't mean all that much to the Soviet Air Force. I think that the Soviets want Aeroflot back into New York badly enough--both for prestige and financial reasons--that they may well make that final Berlin air corridor concession that we seek.

5. This memorandum is predicated on the assumption that we have made a decision to reopen the New York-Moscow air route. Personally I am not convinced of the wisdom of letting Aeroflot reopen KGB fronts in this country or of the necessity for Pan Am to have a New York-Moscow route in order to get fly-through rights through Soviet airspace--which is what Pan Am is really after. But if we are going to reopen the New York-Moscow route, then let's use the occasion as a lever to settle our current Berlin Air Corridor problem.



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